

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members:

The new year is off and running and with it we welcome a new US president and administration. With this change in government an uncertain road lies ahead. Will our new officials change the course of our fundraising this year? Or change the course for our causes, such as education, health care, refugees? Only time will tell. But, fortunately, we are members of an organization that can provide guidance and opportunities to share challenges with each other. In fact, many of AFP's networking groups were actually formed during the recession of 2008 when we faced the challenge of fundraising in a poor economy. These groups proved helpful then and remain helpful to us today.



I hope that you will take full advantage of your membership by attending upcoming programs and networking events, and will make use of all resources such as the local and international websites. Our committees have been hard at work coordinating some wonderful events for 2017. I encourage you to attend the programs taking place in the upcoming weeks, and to please save the date — May 9 — for “Making Fundraising Magic,” our annual regional conference. This year we welcome two national speakers and we have altered the conference schedule to include an afternoon reception and networking happy hour. Please check out our schedule of all upcoming events at <http://www.afpgv.org/upcoming-events>

My heartfelt thanks to all members that helped to make 2016 a successful year for AFPGV, and especially those 66 members that contributed to the “Be the Cause” campaign — we managed to reach our goal by December 31. It is thanks to you that we are able to uphold philanthropy and offer the many programs and events I have mentioned.

Recently, I made a job change, and I can't tell you what a tremendous role AFP has played in my own career success. I hope that you feel the same and that you are enjoying your membership. Please know my door is always open to you; feel free to contact me anytime at [amckenna@stjohnsliving.org](mailto:amckenna@stjohnsliving.org). I hope to see you at an event or program soon and, as always, I wish you much success in 2017.

Sincerely,



Anne McKenna, CFRE  
Executive Director  
St. John's Foundation

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

**Sarah Murphy Abbamonte, MPA**  
Member and Alumnae Engagement Strategist,  
Girl Scouts of Western New York

**Sally A. Cramer**  
Director of Development, Gilda's Club Rochester

**Rob Dermody**  
Director of Development, Volunteers of America  
Upstate New York

**Jennifer Macintyre**  
Senior Accountant, University of Rochester

**Alison Mackenzie**  
Associate Director of Development,  
Genesee Country Village & Museum

**Brent Murrill**  
Director of Development, Geva Theatre Center

**Rich Redding**  
Development Coordinator, Community Place  
of Greater Rochester

**Joanne M. Ryan, MHA**  
VP Development and Marketing,  
Alzheimer's Association

**Amanda Satterwhite**  
Event Director, Al Sigl Community of Agencies

**Tim Scott**  
Executive Coordinator, Rochester Childfirst  
Network

**Kathleen Zastrow**  
Development Associate, Fairport Baptist Homes

Association of Fundraising Professionals  
— Genesee Valley Chapter  
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twtr: [@afpgv](https://twitter.com/afpgv) | fb: [www.facebook.com/afpgv](https://www.facebook.com/afpgv)

Chapter & Verse newsletter  
Juli Stefani and Meghan Mueller, Co-Editors  
Wayne Bulling, Graphic Design

# ARE YOUR DONORS JUMPING SHIP?

IMPROVE ROCKY RETENTION WITH THESE STRATEGIES.

by Jared Longmore, Assistant Director of Development, URMIC



## ***Attrition. Churn. Renewal.***

Odds are you've heard these buzzwords. They all apply to one of the most talked about issues in fundraising – donor retention.

Donor retention rates compare how many donors your organization renews each year versus the number of donors who lapse and take their charitable dollars elsewhere. The percentage of lapsed donors is often called the “donor attrition” or “donor churn” rate.

Low donor retention rates are one of the most significant problems facing nonprofits today. [AFP's 2016 Fundraising Effectiveness Project \(FEP\)](#) finds that the average American nonprofit has retention and attrition rates of 46% and 54%, respectively. And the prognosis for small nonprofits is even more grim.

Low donor retention rates cause inordinately high cost-per-dollar-raised rates and directly affect an organization's bottom line. While national growth-in-giving rates continue to climb, the growth is really driven by a select number of large nonprofit organizations.

Meanwhile the little guys struggle. In 2015, organizations with revenue under \$100k experienced a growth rate of -11.7% and those with revenue of \$100k - \$500k barely broke even with a 0.6% growth rate. These statistics point to obvious differences between small and large nonprofits in overall budget, economies of scale, and maturity of fundraising programs.

Think about retention and attrition rates in other fields. Would an HR professional be happy if they turned over more than half of their staff in a given year? How about a college returning only 50% of freshman for their sophomore year? Or an auto garage whose customers rarely return for other services?

Undoubtedly, you would view these scenarios as symptomatic of a larger problem. If you're struggling to retain donors you might want to pivot towards relationship fundraising. In his book *Relationship Fundraising*, Ken Burnett defines this type of fundraising as “an approach to the marketing of a cause which [centers] not around raising money but on developing to its full potential the unique and special relationship between a charity and its supporter.”

You'll want to start building this relationship early through traditional and digital marketing, social media, facility tours, events, and other opportunities unique to your organization.



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**LOW DONOR RETENTION RATES ARE ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS FACING NONPROFITS TODAY.**

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And once someone makes a gift – make him or her feel like they've joined “the tribe” (click here to see Seth Godin's Ted Talk on *The Tribes We Lead*). Send welcome packets letting them know what it

means to be a supporter of your organization, fill them in on volunteer opportunities, and let them know with whom to speak should they have a question.

With new donors balance is key. You will want them to receive your direct mail and e-solicitations, but you should also be including pieces that are strictly informative. Whether it is newsletters or pure stewardship pieces, you should break up your solicitations. Not only will this educate your donors, which is critically important, but it will also let them know that their gift had meaning.

You'll need to decide the best way to implement these ideas, but if you're looking for inspiration, I recommend reaching out to other nonprofits in your market – particularly those with a strong reputation for annual giving. Odds are they've tapped into many of these donor retention strategies.

Nonprofits are agents of social change in their communities, but they can't be as impactful if they're spending all their fundraising efforts on donor acquisition. Therefore, a concrete donor retention strategy is critical to both the mission and the bottom line. Whether you take the simple advice laid out in this article, or create a more elaborate donor retention strategy, showing your donors extra love will pay off in the end. Your organization will raise more money and build a more engaged base of donors.

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*Editor's note: Have ideas we didn't mention in this article? Send them to [muellermeghan7@gmail.com](mailto:muellermeghan7@gmail.com).*

## HEAD TO HEAD

## FUNDRAISING PREMIUMS, LOVE 'EM OR HATE 'EM

## LOVE 'EM:

by Danielle Abramson Swartz, Director of Station Events & Special Projects, WXXI Public Broadcasting Council

Premiums are useful tools in fundraising, particularly for engaging new donors. Premiums, often called “thank you gifts,” can remove barriers to giving by making the donor feel that their investment has a tangible benefit beyond the inherently philanthropic nature of the act of giving. For potential donors with limited funds, a premium benefit for donating can help make the decision to give much easier. It also gives the donor an item they can use repeatedly and positively associate with the organization, further strengthening their affinity for the organization and the mission. Take care when using premiums because overemphasis can turn a philanthropic impulse into a more transactional relationship and the connection back to the work of the organization can be lost.

## HATE 'EM:

by Emily Marullo, Assistant Director of Donor Engagement, MCC Foundation

Premiums cultivate bad donor behavior and undercut your fundraising case statement. Attracting new, or renewing current, donors with gifts sets you up for an expensive, materialistic, and unproductive relationship. Instead of gimmicky gifts, reward donors with exclusive, behind-the-scenes experiences that reinforce your case statement and make them feel like an important part of the organization. I've heard donors talk about these experiences with contagious passion, turning them into your best community ambassadors.

## PEARLS FROM THE PROS: YOUNG PHILANTHROPISTS

This edition's *Pearls from the Pros* is focused on engaging young philanthropists. Hear what our pros are doing to cultivate their up-and-coming philanthropists.



From Saúl Maneiro, Program Officer, Rochester Area Community Foundation

*“In 2009 the Community Foundation was determined to engage younger philanthropists and created NextGen Rochester as way to connect with young professionals who were interested in pooled giving. NextGen gives its members the opportunity to learn about*

*community needs and magnify the impact they might have as an individual.”*



From Meghan Palumbo, Director of Development, Center for Youth

*“We try to create opportunities for young people to get involved, but then we stand back and let them lead the way. Most recently, we recruited young professionals to start a committee that would focus on fundraising. We gave them the reins, they hosted their first event in November,*

*and with approval from our Board of Directors, they will officially become the Associate Board of The Center for Youth this month!”*




From Emily Marullo, Assistant Director of Donor Engagement, MCC Foundation

*“Each year the MCC Foundation hosts a young philanthropist event. Approximately 10-15 couples or individuals join the event's host committee and invite their friends to support students at MCC. We take advantage of the host committee's networking and social clout and embrace peer to peer fundraising. Hosts serve as role models for their peers and make great board prospects, while attendees become great future host prospects.”*



From Cicely Strickland, Chief Development Officer, United Way of Greater Rochester

*“United Way's young philanthropists, especially those in our Emerging Leaders Society, truly demonstrate their commitment to our community through their gifts. To engage this group we make sure to keep them informed on how their investment is helping local people in need, host networking events and leadership development programs where they can connect with other local leaders and help them serve our community through volunteer and community building opportunities.”* 



## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

## Heather Rickett

Development Specialist at Thompson Foundation  
at UR Thompson Health



*How long have you worked in fundraising?*

I started about seven years ago.

*What's your favorite part about working in fundraising?*

I like interacting with people and making a difference in the community. My "first career" was a social worker/case manager which taught me how to listen and build trusting relationships. When I moved into fundraising listening to donors and helping them connect with projects that will be meaningful to them was an easy and natural transition – and I am still making an impact on the community!

*Why did you become a member of AFP?*

I have attended many AFP events, webinars, and conferences over the years. I recently changed jobs and realized I needed (and wanted) to connect and collaborate more frequently with other fundraising professionals. Joining AFP was an obvious choice.

*What is your favorite non-fundraising thing about Rochester?*

Rochester is rich in music, art, food and festivals – sometimes all wrapped up in one! There is always something fun happening in and around Rochester.

*What are some of your favorite hobbies?*

I am a soccer and softball mom! I also enjoy discovering new restaurants, listening to local music, and exploring the Finger Lakes area. Ultimately, I want to experience adventures and create memories with my family.

*Favorite place to eat in Rochester?*

I can only name one? Impossible!

*What is one office supply you couldn't live without?*

My five color-coded files! They are my most important files that need constant attention.

Find Heather on LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/heather-rickett-2904ba33>

## Upcoming Events

Thursday, March 9 and  
Friday, March 10, 2017

**AFP Fundamentals of Fundraising**

We only offer this program every other year – don't miss it!

Tuesday, March 14, 2017

**AFPGV Breakfast Program**

at Locust Hill Country Club  
"Breaking the Mold of Traditional Communication"

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

**Advancement Answers Networking Group**

Lunch at Panera Bread in Brighton  
12 Corners

Wednesday, March 22, 2017

**Young Professionals Networking Group**

Lunch at Lovin' Cup  
300 Park Point Dr, Rochester,  
on the RIT Campus

Wednesday, April 5, 2017

**Small Shops Networking Group**

Brown Bag Lunch at United Way

Thursday, April 18, 2017

**Young Professionals Networking Group**

Lunch at Napa Wood Fired Pizza  
Route 31 in Perinton

Thursday, April 20, 2017

**Advancement Answers Networking Group**

Happy Hour at Label 7, Pittsford

Wednesday, April 26, 2017

**AFP Webinar** at the University of Rochester - Seminar Room  
Topic: "Investing in Major Gift Fundraising: Make it a Priority!"

Tuesday, May 9, 2017

**AFPGV Regional Conference**

"Making Fundraising Magic"  
Contact AFPGV for details and sponsorship opportunities.

**AFP 2017 REGIONAL CONFERENCE**

The 2017 AFPGV Regional Conference — *Making Fundraising Magic* — will take place on Tuesday, May 9, 2017 at the Holiday Inn Downtown. The conference will begin at noon with a keynote luncheon presentation "Donor Relations the Disney Way" from Wayne Olson. There will be two afternoon sessions in which we will learn about "The Latest Trends in Fundraising" from Jeff Wilkow and wrapping up with Wayne Olson and "The Power of Passionate Fundraising." Also enjoy a Table Topics session and a Networking Happy Hour. For details and registration, visit [afpgv.org](http://afpgv.org).

*Making Fundraising Magic*

**Tuesday, May 9, 2017**

## FUNDRAISERS ABOUT TOWN

**Thank you to everyone who joined AFP's Annual Meeting and Holiday Party at Pomodoro Grill & Wine Bar!**



*Clockwise from top left: Gerianne Puskas, Sarah Frey, Denise Michaelson and Michael Crisona; Who wore it better, Karen Higman or Juliana Stefani? We say these two twins tied!; Sami Sheehan, Sarah Goldstein Post, Gretchen Wood, Terra Keller and Juliana Stefani.*



## 2016 BE THE CAUSE REACHES GOAL!

A huge thank you to all of our generous 2016 BE the CAUSE donors. Each person helped us reach our fundraising goal and ultimately benefit the organization and our local chapter.



### **President's Club (\$1,000 - \$1,999)**

Mark Peterson, CFRE  
Steven Smith, CFRE

### **Silver Ribbon Donor (\$100 - \$249)**

Melanie Barnas-Simmons  
Colleen Brade, CFRE  
Aaron Cantor  
Jillian Carter  
Carol DeMoulin  
Becky Herman  
Terra Keller  
Tracy Kroft  
Jared Longmore  
Carol O'Neal  
Sarah Goldstein Post, CFRE  
Gerianne Puskas  
Tracy Schleyer, CFRE  
Brad Schreiber  
Marc Smith  
Krystyna Staub  
Brenda Thornton  
Marianne Virgilio, CFRE  
John Williams  
Gretchen Wood, CFRE

### **Bronze Ribbon Donor (\$50 - \$99)**

Julie Burke  
Michael Crisona  
Laura Garrison  
John Gleason, CFRE  
Karen Humbert  
Mary Ann King  
Emily Marullo  
Anne McKenna, CFRE  
Daniel Meyers  
Lynn Mulvey  
Cassandra George Ramos  
Debra Salmon

### **Blue Ribbon Donor (\$1 - \$49)**

Calista Amering  
Lauren Bevacqua  
Bonnie Butkas  
Tamara Cohen, CFRE  
Kristin Cook  
Jacquelynn Crego  
Julie Cunningham  
Megan DeFranco  
Kristin Eklin  
Lauren Frank

Melinda Goldberg  
Janice Gouldthorpe  
Cynthia Gray  
Andrew Grossman  
Karen Higman  
Denise Hubler, CFRE  
Charles Levensgood  
Robyn Miller  
Julie Murawski  
Cynthia Pacia  
Marlisa Post  
Jessica Pritchard  
Karen Saludo  
Patricia Schwarzweiler  
Ryan Shear  
Kayleigh Stampfner, CFRE  
Danielle Swartz  
Pamela White  
Kevin Wilson  
Brian Wirth  
Michele Wistner

## Dear Ethical Ethel:

I won an Amazon gift card from a supplier as a result of entering a contest they ran. Can I use the gift card to buy something for myself or do I have to use it to buy something for my organization? No one knows I won except me. I know it would be nice if I used it for my organization, but I feel like it is mine since I entered the contest and this would be a nice bonus.

Signed, *Asking Annie*

### Dear Asking Annie:

First, congratulations on your good fortune!

Ethel is going to make a few assumptions in order to answer your question. I'm going to assume that the value of the gift card is not exorbitant. And I'm going to assume that neither the value of the card nor the source conflicts with any existing policies of your employer.

In terms of the *AFP Guidelines to the Code of Ethical Principles and Standards*, as long as there was no expectation, either stated or implied, of a quid pro quo, there is no issue with accepting the card. As to how you use it, as long as there were no stated restrictions, AFP takes no ethical position on how you spend it.

Ethics is about defending and promoting concepts of right and wrong. In some philosophies, the most ethical path is the one that promotes the greatest good for the most people. As you say, it would be nice if you used the card for your organization. However, your organization would be no worse off if you used the card for your own purposes, so such an action would not be considered unethical.

Whatever you decide, you can rest easy knowing your conscience is clear!

### *Ethical Ethel*

P.S. Have a question for Ethical Ethel? Email it to [ethics@afpgv.org](mailto:ethics@afpgv.org) or submit online at <http://www.afpgv.org/chapter-a-verse-newsletter>. Your question may be used in the AFPGV newsletter or in social media. However, all identifying information will be removed. ☺



## CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

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*Treasurer and President-Elect:*  
Gretchen Wood, CFRE

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*VP of Marketing:* Jared Longmore

*VP of Membership:*  
Sarah Goldstein Post, CFRE

*VP of Professional Advancement:*  
Michael Crisona, MS

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*Chapter & Verse Newsletter Co-Editor:*  
Juli Stefani

*Chapter Administrator:*  
Brenda Thornton